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BOOK NOTICES.

Grundriss der Wildbachverbauung. Von Ferdinand Wang, k. k. Forstrat, etc. Zweiter Theil. Mit 85 Abbildungen und 79 Figuren im Texte. Leipzig, Verlag von S. Mirzel, 1903.

This second volume of the author's large work on the regulation of mountain torrents and the reforestation of dangerous slopes contains the practical application of the theories of the phenomena discussed in the first volume. It appeals especially to the engineer interested in similar subjects by the extensive and instructive records, illustrated by many fine pictures and diagrams, of the methods used and the results accomplished in this work in the European countries. The main objects of the work are protection from the dangerous sudden floods in mountainous regions, reduction of the transporting and erosive power of mountain torrents, regulation of the water supply in the adjoining districts, prevention of landslides, protection from avalanches, etc. The book tells how these objects have been secured by regulating the grades of ravines and gullies, or terracing them, by means of dams or brush fences, by lining the bottoms or the sides of the streams with stones or boards, by covering unsafe slopes with sod, or sowing them with certain mixtures of grasses whose roots have been proved by experiment to hold the soil better than others, and finally, of course, planting them with shrubs or trees. Each of the various methods is fully discussed as to the details of the work itself, the special qualities of each, the applicability of the individual scheme to different conditions; and estimates of the average cost are given. As an especially interesting fact it must be noted that in Austria very good results have been obtained for a number of years by employing convicts from the State prisons to do the work, and thereby making them of some use for the State in return for their board and lodging. This does not mean that the State obtains their work much cheaper than it would that of regular workmen, for, although their wages are naturally very low, they are given credit for the money, and do not receive it before the end of their term, when the whole sum is handed over to them for their new start in life. Their support in those mountain camps, often many miles away from human habitations, is considerably more expensive than it would be in the prison. But the arrangement secures a steady supply of willing hands, since being sent to the camp is a privilege granted for good behaviour, and the exchange of the prison atmosphere for outdoor life and exercise is so much appreciated by the men that the only punishment for insubordination or laziness—return to the prison—has hardly ever been used, and no attempts to escape from the camps have been recorded. Their work seems to redeem even the doubtful past of those men in the estimation of their neighbours, for in several cases free workmen have been found willing to work together with the convicts, and an instance is even quoted of a fire in one of the villages at which the whole camp set out to assist the firemen and of their own accord returned, each and every one of them, to their place of work. It need not be said at what advantage, physically and morally, such a man will find himself at his re-entrance in the world in comparison with his fellow-prisoners who served their terms behind the bars. It seems that both the economic and philanthropic sides of this experience deserve the attention of all who wish to start similar work in this country.

The last part of the book is given over to legislation on, and progress of, the work in the different countries. Reports are available from France, Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Russia, Greece, Spain, and Japan. France is by far the leading country. Bills forbidding deforestation of slopes were issued there as early as 1718 and 1753. The present laws date from the middle of the 19th century, the last of April 4, 1882, requiring a survey and division into so-called "périmètres" of all the Alpine, Cevennes, Plateau Central, and Pyrenees districts. Endangered perimeters are bought up by the State and then improved. The towns and the landowners contribute toward the cost of the improvement, if they are directly benefited by it. Up to 1892 the work achieved included the reforestation of 82,429 hectares of land, the building of 384 first-class, 1,906 second-class, and 17,539 "rustic" dams, the regulation of 340 kilometers of brooks and the draining of 218, the building of 3,875 kilometers of roads, and of 978 kilometers of fences, at a total cost of 27½ million of francs. Switzerland and Austria are next, both in legislation and in the extension of the work; in Germany there used to be need for it only in Alpine districts, but similar work has recently been started in the basin of the Oder, whose floods have been the most destructive in the empire during the last decade. In the other countries, including even Italy, with its large share of Alpine territory, the work is still in the initial stage, while Japan has developed some methods of her own, and adopted others of European origin, whose combination has resulted in some quite remarkable work. M. K. G.

Handbuch der Erdbebenkunde. Von August Sieberg, Erster Assistent am Meteorologischen Observatorium in Aachen. Mit 113 Abbildungen und Karten im Text. Braunschweig, Druck und Verlag von Friedrich Vieweg und Sohn. 1904.

This book is intended, according to an introductory note of the author (*a*) to give a summary of the most important facts, principles, and problems of seismology for the information of the non-specialist, and (*b*) to furnish the specialist with a working knowledge of modern methods and apparatus for seismological work. This twofold purpose practically divides the book into two quite different parts, each of which must be judged from its own point of view. As a separate unit each part ranks with the best that has been published in this line. The introduction and Chapters I and II form the general part. They contain a presentation of seismic phenomena which any one desirous of a well-balanced general information on the subject will easily understand and enjoy. Eminently readable, and free from technical detail, it reminds one of Geikie's class-books, in that it proves that often the best introduction into the elementary aspects of a science can be given by the scientist who knows best how to discern between the essential and the more secondary aspects of the subject. In a brief but complete and satisfactory way, scholarly in spirit and simple in presentation, the main phenomena of seismic activity are discussed, the geographical distribution of earthquakes, both on land and beneath the sea (the latter called "seebeben". sea-quakes, in opposition to earthquakes proper), their causes, foci, epicentra, transit, duration, intensity, frequency, effects, and minor phenomena accompanying the shocks.

The second part, embracing Chapters III and IV, contains descriptions of the various seismic instruments, directions for their use, and hints for their value under various conditions, formulas for seismic calculations, practical suggestions on the collection of seismological data and how to work up the statistical material gathered from various sources, and the like. It is exclusively a guide for working seismologists, and the question may not be out of place whether it would not be wiser, after